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The lesson is clear. We will only get what we win by our own efforts. The Trump era was not a historical anomaly. It's not behind us. We are still in it, and we can only get through it by fighting.

The Case For Resistance

PREPARING TO CONFRONT DONALD TRUMP'S SECOND TERM

CRIMETHINC. EX-WORKERS COLLECTIVE
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This text was published 11.20.2024.
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Notes

1 Just as the Democrats willingly undermined the "international rules-based system" that they supposedly represent in order to facilitate genocide in Palestine, it is not surprising that they are willing to sacrifice the democratic order to fascists in the name of protecting the democratic order. For all of Trump's rhetoric about the United Nations, the Democratic Party's unconditional support for the genocide perpetrated by the Israeli government has done more to undermine the UN as a political force than anything Trump has done.

2 Elon Musk became the world's richest man in part as a consequence of the United States government channeling billions of taxpayer dollars into Tesla in the form of government loans, contracts, tax credits, and subsidies. He knows that who controls Washington, DC determines who can make a killing in the market.

3 Billionaires want a president in the White House who will funnel money to them, but they don't want it at the cost of the smooth functioning of the economy. If a critical mass of billionaires shifted their allegiances to Trump between 2020 and 2024, it was, in part, because the Democrats succeeded in pacifying street unrest during that time, emboldening the billionaires to see whether they could get away with imposing more draconian conditions.

4 During the first Trump presidency, networks sprang up to support marginalized people in "red" states; this peaked in 2020 with a wave of redistribution efforts aimed at combating white supremacy by moving resources around on an individual basis. It is noteworthy that these funds and initiatives became ubiquitous only after the first phase of the George Floyd Uprising, when the struggle shifted from burning police stations to holding signs and kneeling. This time around, we can aspire to establish collective projects that function as a commons that benefits all participants, rather than attempting to solve the systemic problems that capitalism creates with individualized solutions.

It's understandable that many people feel exhausted at the prospect of a second Trump era. It's easy to want to tune out and dissociate. What can we do, anyway?

But we don't know how the first Trump era would have gone if not for the ways that millions of people engaged in various forms of resistance. Difficult as it was, it could have been *much worse*. We didn't topple capitalism or abolish the police, but we kept fascists from taking over the streets, and we prevented Trump and his supporters from accomplishing a great deal of their agenda. Anyone who tells you otherwise is trying to conceal our collective power.

As long as we relied on our own strength, we became more and more powerful. Our protests galvanized others into action, showing what was at stake and where the regime was vulnerable. Our actions shaped public narratives, counteracting Trump's efforts to determine popular discourse. The resulting unrest gave the capitalist class the impression that Trump's reign was bad for business, sapping their support. It was only after we had apparently driven Trump from the stage of history that we let our guard down, permitting our social movements to dwindle and creating a situation in which the Democratic Party could cede power once again.

The lesson is clear. We will only get what we win by our own efforts. The Trump era was not a historical anomaly. It's not behind us. We are still in it, and we can only get through it by fighting.

Now it is happening again: the Democratic Party is handing Donald Trump the keys to the kingdom, including the most advanced means of repression in the history of the solar system. The popular power expressed in the 2020 uprising—the only thing that has been powerful enough to stop this aspiring dictator—has dissipated, undermined by the same Democrats who claimed that they knew best how to defeat Trump.

This is a pivotal moment, and everyone who isn't cynically detached is sounding the alarm. Those of us who recognize the necessity of fighting had better find each other, identify the strengths and weaknesses of all the parties involved, recall the lessons of the past eight years, and strategize.

The Balance of Forces

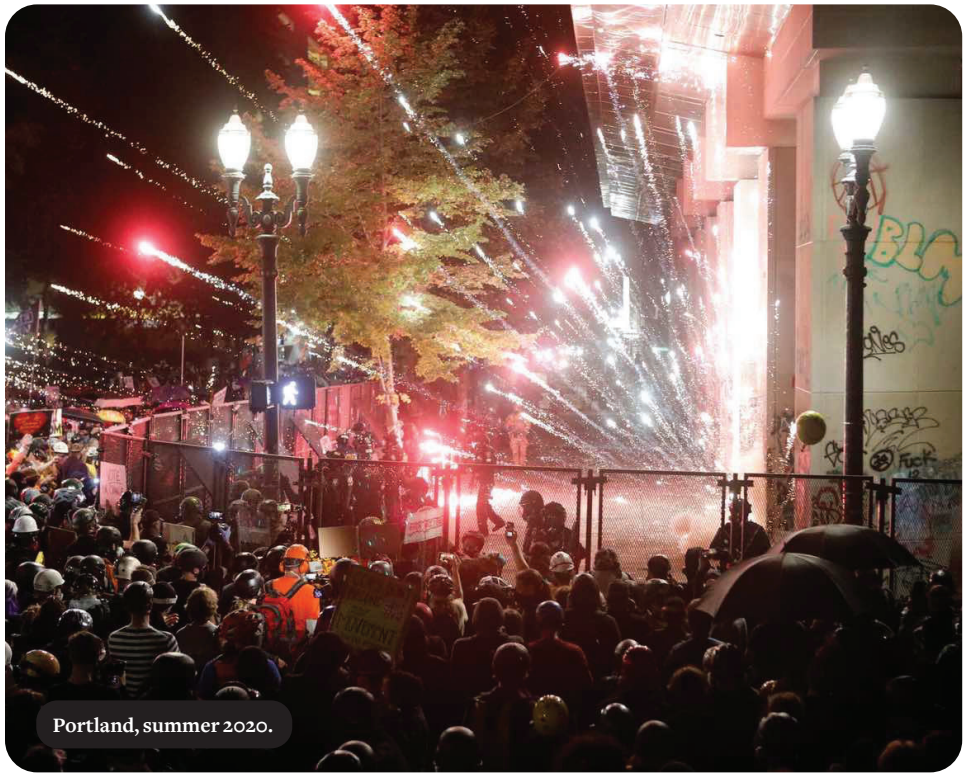
In some ways, we are in a worse position than we were in 2017. Trump's election in 2016 came as a shock to everyone, provoking an immediate mass response; at the time, the occupation of Standing Rock and the uprisings against police violence in Ferguson and Baltimore were fresh in the minds of millions. This time, the 2020 uprising feels like a distant memory, despite the fact that it was exponentially larger than those earlier movements. Last spring's student movement in solidarity with Palestine was inspiring, but it did not spread far enough beyond the universities to survive repression and summer break.

Nonetheless, tens of millions of us share the experience of participating in the largest mass uprising in the United States in at least half a century. Those memories have been buried beneath subsequent sedimentary layers of history, but they are not entirely inaccessible.

For the first time, Trump has won the popular vote, making gains with some voters of color. A larger part of the population is prepared to vote for overt fascism than before, knowing full well what they are doing this time. Although grassroots fascist activity dropped off after the abortive coup of January 6, 2021, neo-Nazis have resumed making appearances on the streets. If Trump pardons those serving time as a result of January 6, far-right organizations like the Proud Boys will likely return to the streets in full force.

The deportations—and any struggle against them—will happen in physical reality, not on social media. If a dozen communities begin immediately organizing mass strategic resistance to deportation, researching logistical chains, outlining targets and strategic goals, and welcoming a diversity of participants and tactics, they could demonstrate effective resistance and light a signal fire for others around the country. If people get organized now and begin to map out and target the infrastructure for mass deportation before Trump takes office, they could seize the initiative, set the tempo, and force him to be the one to have to react.

In 2017, when Trump signed the so-called "Muslim ban," a single mass occupation at JFK Airport in New York sparked occupations involving tens of thousands of people around the country. Tactics spread rapidly when they are inspiring. What can you and your community do, right now, to prepare to inspire nationwide resistance to the deportation machine?



Portland, summer 2020.

members, and friends, handcuffed and waiting on the tarmac. All of these are opportunities for resistance to erupt. The deportations will not all occur in darkness; many of them will take place in public, in broad daylight. It is up to us to make sure that no one can ignore them, and to help others to understand what they can do.

Armies succeed or fail based on their logistics. A complex logistical chain involving multiple agencies and forms of transportation, directed by leaders who are attempting to act on a much larger scale than before, will be prone to failure. How might these logistical links fail?

As the saying goes, our enemies have names and addresses. During the first Trump presidency, people doxxed every ICE agent they could find. Every raid will require the cooperation of local law enforcement; each one will involve staging areas and transport buses. Where do the buses come from? Who maintains them? Are those people also ideologically invested in fascism, or do some of them have misgivings? Where will the new detention facilities be staged? Who will build them? What airports will these deportation flights leave from? What supply lines will support them? How many low-wage airport workers have a stake in the fight against fascism?

In one possible version of an anti-deportation struggle, there will be mass demonstrations, moral outrage, fruitless lawsuits, and symbolic civil disobedience. Most of the participants will be self-professed activists. Efforts to center the authority of existing formal organizations that are not in a position to call for certain kinds of action will impose limits on what tactics the movement can experiment with. Internal divisions and interpersonal competition for control of the movement will further hamper it.

In another possible version of the struggle, every sector of society will become involved in resisting the deportation machine. Local liberal-leaning governments will be pressured into refusing to cooperate with federal agencies. Rapid response networks will bring people out in massive numbers to confront raids—and not all of them will limit themselves to following the leadership of official organizations. Bus drivers will go on strike; buses will mysteriously cease to function; coordinated highway blockades could shut down traffic to airports that are critical deportation hubs. Every form of struggle will emerge, and every participant will be encouraged to take whatever action they can, and the combination of anger and small, concrete victories will motivate more people to act.

After eight years of scandals and emergencies, everyone is desensitized and demoralized. Both institutional and rank-and-file Democrats appear to be prepared to roll over and let Trump do what he wants. Like in 2017, Republicans will control the White House, the House of Representatives, and the Senate; once again, they wield deep institutional power while pretending to be "rebels" against the state that they control. This time around, however, Trump is prepared to push his agenda much further. In 2017, as an upstart in the Republican Party, he was obliged to fill his administration with neocons and other traditional Republicans. Now the Republicans are united behind him, and he is preparing to gut the entire federal government and the upper ranks of the military and install a gang of loyalists.

This could create new weaknesses for him, however. Promoting sycophants to positions of power on the basis of loyalty rather than expertise will not necessarily create an effective government. The more emboldened Trump and his henchmen are, the more likely they are to provoke resistance. In attempting to appoint a cabinet full of rapists, conspiracy theorists, and Fox News hosts, he will force even the most milquetoast liberals to at least temporarily cease to

The fascism they want.

regard the United States government as legitimate. Purging thousands of people from the government and the military while waging open war upon some of the most desperate sectors of society could incite resistance on multiple fronts.

How Popular Is Trump?

Donald Trump is not significantly more popular in 2024 than he was in 2020, nor does he represent a majority of the population. He added a couple million votes to the number he received in 2020, but he still received considerably fewer votes in 2024 than Joe Biden received in 2020, despite the fact that the US population has increased by several million since then. And remember—Biden was not actually popular in 2020, as became obvious afterwards.

So Trump has not really gained popularity. The Democratic Party has lost popularity, that's all.

This is not surprising. The Democrats have sought to be the party of compromise between irresolvable opposites. They tried to fashion a compromise between capitalism and the working class, between police and the communities that they brutalize, between genocide and peace.[1]

Small wonder that they failed. Actually, it is surprising how well they did, considering that they ran on the platform of "democracy" without so much as offering voters a primary in which to choose a candidate. Most other ruling parties around the world fared even worse in the elections of 2024.

But that doesn't mean people like the Democrats. It just means that people hate Donald Trump.

If some Democrats are eager to respond to this election by chasing the Republicans even further to the right, this only shows how badly they are still misjudging the situation. Their attempt to court the center by cozying up to neoconservatives failed to build a viable majority. This is because *the status quo is unpopular*. The people who propelled Trump to victory were largely casting protest votes against the ruling order. As we foresaw last July, the center cannot hold.

The 2024 election represents the end of the technocratic neoliberal consensus that dominated the world from the 1970s to the 2010s. Trump's popularity is not a unique phenomenon. All around the world, far-right populist movements are growing and authoritarian leaders are gaining

we cannot expect much from a court system that will be dominated by Trump appointees. It will be necessary take steps to prevent the deportation machinery from functioning: to block it via mass action when possible, but also to throw sand in the gears, to disrupt its logistics and organization.

Let's take a brief look at how Trump might implement these mass deportations and what forms resistance could assume.

According to Jason Hauser, the chief of staff for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under Biden, the infrastructure already exists to expand the deportation machine to a massive scale. Guatemalan, Haitian, and Honduran communities may be targeted first, because deportation to those countries is more straightforward than to many other countries. These communities will likely be targeted with raids at workplaces, churches, hospitals, and schools, and the arrests of those who are already on the record for nonviolent offences or because of their limbo status in an asylum process. Expect raids, buses, and camps.

Once apprehended, these people must be transported to holding facilities. Those could be rapidly erected tents, existing jails that are packed to two or three times their official capacity limits, warehouses converted into temporary detention facilities, military bases, or new facilities constructed with military funding. One official claims that 25 temporary detention facilities could be created in existing warehouses in just one week.

Once in custody, the arrestees will eventually be deported by plane flights. ICE currently has 14 dedicated deportation planes that can carry 135 people each, amounting to a total capacity of 1890 people per round trip. They also contract out many flights through Classic Air Charter, subcontracting with Swift Air and World Atlantic Airlines. If Trump succeeds in invoking the Insurrection Act or the Alien Enemies Act to mobilize the military and bypass immigration hearings, this number could rise dramatically. The current ICE director estimates that between 150,000 and 200,000 people could be deported within the first one or two months, and up to a million in the first 100 days.

This is frightening. And yet plans rarely survive contact with reality. Mass deportation would mean visible ICE actions with the cooperation of law enforcement in every sector of society. It would mean buses filled with prisoners everywhere. It would mean local law enforcement agencies being pulled away from other tasks and redirected towards immigration enforcement. It would mean plane after plane full of neighbors, family

of fascism, more so than jackbooted thugs and prison camps. Our enemies are counting on us to assume that resistance is impossible, to keep our heads down while our neighbors disappear, our communities are plundered, our life support systems are dismantled. But resistance is always possible. The fact that you are reading this right now proves that.

Appendix: Strategizing to Stop Mass Deportations

The incoming administration has been very clear about their intention to maintain public support by attacking scapegoats. This was one of the central promises of their campaign and it is popular among Trump's core supporters. We can understand this as the desire of an increasingly powerless population to enact violence vicariously through a brutal autocrat—an ominous sign of human beings turning on each other as profit margins diminish and prospects for the future decline.

If we let Donald Trump and Stephen Miller expand the infrastructure of state violence, using military funds to build "vast holding facilities" for the millions that they have promised to arrest and deport, they will not stop at deporting undocumented immigrants. Once that additional infrastructure exists, they will turn it against one target after another. Eventually, they will come for all of us.

All who don't want to see their neighbors, friends, and classmates or coworkers disappeared share a responsibility to act. During Trump's first term, opposition to his border regime was a powerful cause of popular unrest, from the airport occupations in response to his "Muslim Ban" to the Occupy ICE encampments and the outpouring of solidarity following his manufactured "border crisis" in fall 2018. In 2019, when Donald Trump announced that ICE was about to carry out a new round of massive raids, Willem van Spronsen gave his life in an attempt to disable to the fleet of buses serving a private immigration detainment facility in Tacoma. Afterwards, asked why the raids were not happening, an ICE official expressed that they were concerned for the safety of their officers.

Opposition to Trump's border policies initially emerged in the streets; only afterwards did legal challenges emerge in the courts. Now, of course,

political legitimacy. For decades, liberals and conservatives have worked together to suppress grassroots movements seeking to address the problems created by neoliberal capitalism; this created a vacuum that the far-right has ultimately filled. In that regard, the Democrats paved the way for nationalism and fascism to succeed neoliberalism. Presumably, they assume that those will be less threatening to their privileges than the end of capitalism would be.

Perhaps this explains how the Democratic Party could spend years decrying Trump as a fascist, then immediately arrange a *peaceful transfer of power*. Institutional Democrats are hiding their heads in the sand, hoping that if they remain faithful to the institutions of democracy, even unilaterally, those institutions might survive the next four years. But considering how dramatically the playing field has shifted over the past eight years, there is no reason to believe that those institutions will remain intact unless the ruling class needs them as bargaining chips.

None of this is good news. Those who are disappointed by the Democrats will not necessarily find their way to movements for liberation.

The Democrats have no intention to stand up for those that Donald Trump intends to attack. They are the knowing accomplices of fascism.

They could drift further to the right, or gravitate towards authoritarian leftist pyramid schemes, or withdraw into apathy entirely. But there are opportunities here.

Billionaire Supervillains

It is surprising that Trump could not add more to his voter base, considering that the world's richest man supported him by spending $44 billion to buy the world's chief political discussion platform and well over a hundred million dollars more on private election canvassing—including efforts to bribe working-class voters by picking a daily million-dollar lottery winner.

Real supervillain stuff.

Elon Musk and Donald Trump both pretend that they were drawn to politics out of a sense of civic duty; in fact, both are simply scaling up their business ventures by expanding to trade in state power.[2]

The day after the election, a rise in stock shares added $26.5 billion to Musk's net worth, in the biggest such spike on record. While the Democrats are still trying to preserve neoliberal capitalism as it was, the Republicans represent a new fusion of populist nationalism and oligarchy that seeks to extract profit directly through the state while channeling the rage of the poor into scapegoating the even poorer.

Trump and Musk are only able to masquerade as selfless benefactors because resources have become so unevenly distributed that a few billionaires can determine the outcome of an election. These are the same people who control the supply chain, the communications and news platforms, and the emerging fields of artificial intelligence, neurotechnology, and space travel. This is 21st-century fascism, in which autocracy and technocracy blend together, creating overlapping matrices of control that function at every scale from the intracellular to the interplanetary.

Whatever promises they make to the white working class, their actual priority is to enrich themselves. You can't carry out a gigantic wealth transfer into the coffers of billionaires while also solving the economic problems of ordinary Americans. Trump has always succeeded in taking advantage of popular grievances by making poor people identify with him as a symbol of success, giving them the vicarious thrill of cheering for the winning team even as he empties their pockets into his own. But that may not placate people

the armed forces or bureaucracy will be enthusiastic about serving Trump's whims.

Study the First Trump Era

For those who have not been on the streets continuously since 2017, it will help to study the various struggles of the first Trump era, in order to refine a sense of strategy and historic context.

Reach Out

As resistance gets underway, it will be crucial to make it visible to everyone who has a stake in participating. This could mean making the walls speak with posters and stickers. It could mean distributing literature at your school or in your community. It could mean creating art and music that strengthens the resolve to resist.

Reach In

All of us would probably rather be doing something other than scrambling to prevent fascism from taking hold. We need to find ways to keep this work interesting to us and to everyone else who will have to do it—ways to keep our spirits up and to develop the kind of character that will sustain us through periods of hardship.

Try to organize a concrete victory early on, however small. Brainstorm with your friends: what Trump policy will be least popular in our local community? Make a plan to contest the implementation of that policy. Get started *before* Trump is inaugurated.

Think about how to offer roles to new people, welcoming them into the fight. To succeed, our strategies will have to be reproducible and contagious. Everything we do—regardless of how popular it is—will have to create conditions that will draw more people into action. It is a mistake to flatten differences into a popular front, but we will need as many people involved in the resistance as possible. When you encounter differences, don't get stuck in ideological posturing; make a proposition about what you can do together based on what you have in common.

Above all, do not let resignation take hold. Resignation is the foundation

police connects those who oppose state violence on ideological grounds to those who continuously experience it firsthand. This has made for explosive forms of solidarity before, and it can again.

If we want to make our opposition to police as persuasive as possible, however, we should also be experimenting with grassroots programs to address the issues that they supposedly exist to solve. Capitalism has done real damage to the social fabric, contributing to fentanyl overdoses, increasingly visible poverty and mental health crises, and other forms of mass violence. More policing will not fix those problems. By drawing money out of every form of social support and channeling it towards the forces of repression, politicians have gambled that they can stabilize an extremely unequal society via continuously escalating exertions of violent force. We should demonstrate that there is an alternative.

Debunk Liberal Narratives

Liberals who chanted "No one is above the law" during the first Trump administration must recognize that, with the Supreme Court and much of the judiciary under his control, it no longer makes sense to look to the courts to restrain him. The same goes for the federal investigations in which Democrats invested so much hope. This should be a teachable moment for them: if they are sincere, they will have to get involved with grassroots forms of direct action.

Liberals must stop thinking about the government as representing what is best within humanity. It has become eminently clear that capitalism and the state are elevating the *worst* elements of humanity to positions of authority. This is not an accident, but the structural consequence of the systems that distribute power. To navigate the ongoing Trump era, we will need to share a thoroughgoing analysis of these systems.

Sow the Seeds of Defiance

Spread narratives impugning obedience itself. As Hannah Arendt said, in the face of fascism, "No one has the right to obey." Make sure that these reach functionaries in the bureaucracy and members of the armed forces. Police departments and federal agencies like the Department of Homeland Security are already comprised of hardened mercenaries who have no compunction about doing harm in return for a paycheck, but not everyone in

indefinitely.

Ostensibly, Donald Trump intends to do to the United States government what Elon Musk did to Twitter: seize it, fire everyone who is not loyal to him, and turn it into a vehicle for profiteering and spreading fascism. When Musk took over Twitter, a rash of articles appeared claiming that he would drive it into the ground and the platform would soon cease to function entirely. Unfortunately, that would have been preferable to what actually happened. Despite a few technical glitches, Twitter kept functioning. Musk banned or drove away enough of his critics away to transform discourse on the platform, leaving just enough diversity intact to preserve popular investment. This is how authoritarians achieve hegemony: with a mix of repression and tolerance.

Regardless of the doomsaying of some journalists, we should anticipate something similar from the second Trump administration. There will be a messy transitional period and a wave of repression, but the real threat is that our society will continue functioning under an even more authoritarian framework—and that most people will accommodate themselves to it.

However, none of these stories has yet reached its conclusion. Ever since Musk acquired it, the platform formerly known as Twitter has been steadily losing credibility and hemorrhaging supporters—not unlike the United States government over the past decade. Historically, emperors surrounded by toadies who only tell them what they want to hear rarely manage to establish stability.

The desire to see others harmed in their name has come to substitute for the desire to improve their own lives.

We can anticipate chaos and disorganization, then—one crisis after another—and it is possible that the general population, always fickle, will turn against Trump as he fails to solve their problems, just like the Biden administration.

So now is the time to think boldly, to fight for something more inspiring than a return to Democratic rule. We are not surrounded by fascist bootlickers who desire to be dominated—or at least, they do not comprise a majority yet. We are surrounded by desperate people who are largely disappointed in electoral politics because it has so little to offer them. They will remain on the sidelines until a better way opens up.

Know Your Enemy

We have at least one advantage. Donald Trump is a known quantity. If it is not always possible to foresee his moves, his reactions are usually predictable. It should be possible to exploit his weaknesses.

Trump thrives on media attention. Seeking to control the news cycle, he manufactures one crisis after another, each intended to distract from the last. During his first term, this forced many people into a cycle of reaction, allowing Trump to set the tempo of engagement. When your enemy controls the tempo of the conflict, he can keep you continually on the defensive.

To this end, Trump is always saying and doing horrible things. With his cabinet picks, for example, it appears that he is trying to provoke a scandal so that his most outrageous nominations function as lightning rods channeling anger and attention, enabling him to push through the rest of his agenda unnoticed.

It is up to us to set our own priorities, to seize the initiative and force our adversaries to fight on the terrain we choose. Knowing some of Trump's plans for his first days in office, we can begin choosing battles that we might be able to win. The earlier that people can achieve a few decisive victories, even on a local scale, the sooner people everywhere will rediscover that resistance is possible.

Trump will overreach, especially if we force him to. Recall the heady days of summer 2020, when he was trying to show his backers in the ruling class that he could regain control of the streets. When he sent federal agents into Portland in July 2020, he was pouring gasoline on a fire, catalyzing a

more widespread repression, they might overwhelm the judicial apparatus. We should be prepared to make the most of this, tying them up in court and drawing out proceedings wherever possible.

Prepare to Resist Raids and Deportations

Prepare to respond to ICE raids in clever and effective ways that use repression to leverage outrage. Mass deportations will require massive logistics and infrastructure, providing a host of opportunities for intervention.

This option is explored in detail in the section "Appendix: Strategizing to Stop Mass Deportations."

Organize Pressure Campaigns

- Pressure local and state authorities not to collaborate with the Trump administration in concrete ways. Identify specific politicians and functionaries, find a variety of ways to approach them, and make it clear what the consequences will be for complicity.
- Identify local agencies and corporations that will play a logistical role in implementing the Trump agenda and bring pressure to bear against them.

Encourage liberals who have experience with phone canvassing to participate in call-in campaigns to pressure officials or support arrestees and prisoners.

Organize against the Police

The police always comprise the cutting edge of state violence; once again, they will be at the forefront of imposing all of Trump's policies. Through four years of centrist reaction, the Democratic Party and corporate news platforms promulgated a "law and order" narrative intended to re-legitimize the police; the second Trump era will make it clear once again that police are simply the stormtroopers of the ruling class. What's more, as Trump calls for new crackdowns, the police may be overextended in new ways.

The most powerful uprisings in this country over the past fifteen years have been revolts against the police, culminating in 2020. Resistance to

Establish Mutual Aid Projects

- Establish mutual aid projects addressing the needs that will be more difficult to fulfill under the Trump administration, such as hormone access and reproductive self-determination.
- Establish mutual aid projects addressing people's economic needs, such as solidarity networks and really really free markets. These need not only serve those in the worst conditions of need; ideally, they should show everyone what they have to gain from participating in mutual aid, connecting people from many different walks of life.

We should take seriously the economic concerns that pushed some people towards Trump. We know the economy will not work for poor people under Trump, either; it may well get worse. Mutual aid projects are one of the only ways that we can demonstrate to some of those who voted for Trump that they are better off making common cause with us than trusting politicians' lies.

While it will be tempting to retreat into enclaves or break off conversations with those who do not already agree with us, we should seek to nourish social connections that are not yet politically mapped and polarized.

Establish Community Defense Projects

- Organize community self-defense classes. In addition to spreading useful skills, these can connect people on a basis that can also equip them to act together. If space is available, you could set up a community gym to serve a similar purpose.
- Form affinity groups with those you trust and begin discussing what kinds of action you would be prepared to engage in together in response to raids or fascist attacks.
- Establish bail funds, defendant support structures, and resources for collective defense ahead of time, so you'll be ready in advance. Although some lawmakers have attempted to pass laws against this kind of solidarity work, there are still ways to get around those.
- This is also a good time to revitalize prisoner support projects.

One of the challenges that the authorities will face is that the court and prison systems are already overextended. If they attempt to escalate to

massive public response that the federal agencies loyal to him—chiefly Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Department of Homeland Security—could not suppress. Those who had initially watched from the sidelines eventually poured into the streets, taking up umbrellas, leaf blowers, fireworks, and shields. They continued coming out for over a hundred consecutive days.

Arguably, Trump was not defeated at the polls in November of that year, but in the streets in July 2020, when the people of Portland demonstrated that his lackeys were no match for them. This cost Trump the support of capitalists seeking to reestablish law and order—at least in *that* election.[3]

Exerting Leverage

A crucial element of the victory that took place in summer 2020 was the polarization of local and state governments against Trump. The complicity of Democratic officials in "blue" states and cities is well-established, but they still have to pretend to represent their constituencies, which often means chasing after powerful social movements in hopes of coopting them. If we play our cards right, we should be able to force Democrat-controlled local and state governments and agencies to refuse to cooperate with at least some of Trump's programs. In 2020, popular sentiment forced many local prosecutors to drop the charges against those arrested during the uprising. Many municipalities have been declared sanctuary cities. As empty as those words often are, we can aim to force politicians to give them meaning. Any division that emerges within the ruling class, however small, will be to our advantage.

The first battle will be fought for the hearts—and schedules—of anarchists and other rebels who were active in 2020. Do we have it in us to mobilize again, more, differently? The second battle will be fought for a broader swath of the population, including rank-and-file Democrats. Are they prepared to accept the second Trump era as business as usual, or will they gravitate towards resistance?

If Democrat politicians are not compelled to break with the Republican agenda, we could end up in a countrywide situation analogous to what happened to the Stop Cop City movement in Atlanta, where the majority

of the general population came to oppose the proposed police training facility but politicians of every stripe closed ranks in a bipartisan consensus in favor of imposing it by brute force. But if a critical mass of rank-and-file Democrats conclude that they have a responsibility to become unruly, that will force at least some Democratic politicians to hold themselves apart from the "law and order" consensus.

We should also anticipate defections from the bureaucratic and managerial classes. Trump plans to fire thousands of federal employees and surely many more will resign. The effects will trickle down to every level of society. We need to create opportunities for newly disaffected people to connect with each other and put their skills at the service of the movement. If some of them bring insider knowledge of the bureaucracy, all the better. When it comes to leaks from those who retain their positions, there should be an emphasis on equipping movements to act rather than simply seeking to discredit the administration in an imagined court of public opinion.

To take on an entire government, we have to create friction between the different factions that comprise it and exploit the vulnerabilities that this opens up.

Refine Our Strategies

Some of the tools and strategies that we relied on during the first Trump administration may no longer serve us.

Doxxing, deplatforming, and social media bans could disrupt right-wing formations until the right seized control of social media platforms like Twitter. They are unlikely to be effective under an openly fascist regime in which far-right street fighters are granted clemency and rewarded for their misdeeds via crowdfunding and media hype.

Even before Elon Musk purchased Twitter, social media platforms had become sparring rings in which contenders jockeyed for legitimacy in a zero-sum competition, and this had filtered out to influence the atmosphere of some other organizing venues. Such dynamics do not serve us well. This time around, we will have to set aside a variety of destructive patterns if we are to create ecosystems of resistance that can thrive under such challenging conditions.

Mutual aid projects will be important. People will need hormones, birth control, abortion pills, money for traveling for medical care or escaping a hostile environment, assistance averting various forms of state violence. But these

it remains to be seen how durable that will be—and as long as capitalism prevails, every corporate-owned platform remains at the mercy of the market. For these reasons, Mastodon is still the best bet, but thus far, people are not joining it in massive enough numbers for it to suffice to inform the kind of mass movements we will need.

The unequivocally good news is that the exodus from Musk's platform shows that people are not yoked to social media platforms, no matter how well-established. From now on, tech billionaires who seek to control the "public square" will be aiming at a moving target.

Establish Local Organizing Venues

Get people in your community used to coming together in person. Establish face-to-face relationships between people doing different kinds of organizing and impacted by different aspects of the Trump agenda. One easy way to get this process started is to host ongoing assemblies, whether to connect new people to ongoing organizing or for different groups and tendencies to establish complementary strategies. Another option is to establish a public venue, such as a social center or regular meeting place, that can serve as a hub for ongoing coordination and a point of entry for people looking to get involved. A third possibility is to establish neighborhood associations connecting those who live and work close to each other.

Most people learn best through action and experimentation. It is better to try something out, learning in the process, than to attempt to reach consensus about the perfect idea.

Build Rapid Response Networks

Once the Trump era gets underway, it will be important to have means via which to immediately circulate breaking news about opportunities to resist or to support targeted groups. One way to do this is to set up an announcements-only thread on Signal and promote it to everyone who might need it. It might make sense to establish a few different response networks—one to announce federal operations and immigration checkpoints in your area, another to promote local organizing events, and so on.

Get these structures in place now, before the pace of events picks up.

Many of Trump's ostensible opponents have maintained that two of the negative consequences of the next Trump administration will be that more people will "radicalize" (to the left as well as the right) and that there will be "chaos" (which is to say, disruptive protests). The implication is that Trump *wants* and *benefits* from both of these phenomena. It is incumbent on us to articulate which *kinds* of polarization and chaos actually benefit Trump and which do not. Donald Trump did not win the 2024 elections because people took to the streets—he lost the 2020 elections as a consequence of disruptive protests, and he won the 2024 election in part because those died off. Everyone must understand this.

Here are some concrete steps that we can take as individuals and movements.

Quit X/Twitter; Diminish Reliance on Instagram; Join Mastodon and Bluesky

In some ways, Trump's victory can be traced directly to Elon Musk's acquisition of Twitter. With Musk playing a role in the incoming Trump administration, the platform may provide warrant-free intelligence directly to federal agencies, while the algorithms will continue to promote authoritarian narratives. Now that tech billionaires are accommodating themselves to Trump's rule, the same goes for Facebook, which has already lost status as an organizing space, but also for Instagram, which countless anarchist and leftist projects still depend on. This is not just a concern for self-identifying radicals, but for everyone who relies on social media for information.

Fortunately, since the election, millions of people have been fleeing Musk's platform. Some are going to Instagram Threads, which is hardly better, but millions have been joining Bluesky, creating a new public sphere of discourse that could play a role in circulating news and ideas. While the owners of Bluesky have succeeded in branding it as a welcoming space for many of the demographics that the Trump administration intends to target,

are fundamentally defensive strategies that must be connected with offensive forms of struggle to succeed.[4]

We cannot separate care and struggle, nor should we let the desire for individual safety interfere with the forms of collective action that represent our only hope of following through on the slogan "We keep us safe."

Fight Smart

We must refuse to let any aspect of Trump's agenda become normalized. At the same time, we should not let his actions provoke us into a condition of perpetual outrage that produces diminishing returns. We must pay close attention to what is happening without letting him dictate the pace of our actions or drain our emotional energy. This requires thinking strategically, looking for opportunities to act effectively rather than simply to pass judgment. Every day will be its own emergency, and each one will be truly urgent—and yet we will not be able to change our priorities every day. We will have to build sustainable forms of resistance through continuous action, seeking strategies that build capacity over time rather than burning out.

If we can develop such strategies, they will also prepare us to confront what Adam Greenfield calls the *long emergency* of intertwined climate change, political instability, and societal collapse. As hurricanes and floods batter our communities alongside new assaults from the state, we must accept that nothing is ever going back to normal and proceed accordingly.

How Can We Resist?

We will not be able to simply pick up where we left off in 2020. Once again, there will be a learning curve—we will have to connect with new people, demonstrate tactics, make proposals, and debunk liberal assumptions about what is acceptable or effective. If we can hold our ground long enough, some sectors of the population that are currently beguiled or demoralized will probably become restless again, especially if the economy does not improve. But we also can't let Trump steal a march on us. The first few months will determine how far this goes, how fast.

Demonstrators mobilize in Berkeley, California at the beginning of Donald Trump's first term.